Identification of linguistic minorities

3868. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have identified linguistic minorities in various States, if so, State-wise details of such minorities;

(b) the nodal agency to identify such linguistic minorities and the parameters for identifying them;

(c) the initiatives taken to promote cultures, customs and languages of linguistic minorities;

(d) whether an institutionalized mechanism has been set up to coordinate efforts with the State Governments in implementing such initiatives, if so, the outcome of such a mechanism; and

(e) whether the likely financial obligations have been shared between the Centre and the States?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (e) Linguistic minorities have not been defined in the Constitution or by any statute. They get defined when their mother tongue differs from the regional language of the area. They are identified by State Governments/Union Territory Administrations on the basis of Census data. The details of linguistic minorities, State-wise, are given in Chapter-III of the 40th Report of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities already tabled in the House on 16-8-2004. This is also a available at the website *www.nclm.nic.in.* Article 350(B) of the Constitution provides for the appointment of a Special Officer commonly known as Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (CLM).

It is the duty of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament and sent to the Governments of the States concerned.

States/Union Territories are expected to appoint nodal officers to liaise with the office of the Commissioner for linguistic minorities and also coordinate with departments concerned in implementing the safeguards.

No subsidy system in solar power usage

3869. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the solar home lighting systems have since been fine-tuned to replace kerosene in rural households thereby eliminating subsidy and cross subsidy worth thousands of crores of rupees, adulteration of fuel and finally smoke and pollution in rural homes;

(b) whether the projects sponsored by UNEP and TERI in Karnataka attempt to replace subsidy in solar power systems with entrepreneurial initiative and short-term assistance;

(c) whether under this scheme vendors offer a menu of lighting devices and maintenance service backed by micro-credit progressively aligned to commercial rates; and

(d) if so, the steps to popularize this no-subsidy system in solar powe usage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR) (a) the solar home lighting systems can replace kerosene lamps anc offer better quality of light without pollution and health hazards. However in view of the present high cost, the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources is providing subsidy on solar home lighting systems.

(b) and (c) In January, 2003 UNEP had launched a three year projec in Karnataka and Kerala to offer soft loans for purchase of solar home lighting systems through some banks at 5 per cent annual interest rate, to be repaid in five years. In addition, Rs. 300 per loan were provided to the banks to partly meet the high transaction cost involved in disbursing small loans. Under this project, by January, 2005, 11,650 loans were sanctioned and in the remaining period another 11,350 systems were to be supported.